

List of other Ornithological Publications received.

- GRINNELL, BRYANT, and STORER. *The Game Birds of California.* Berkeley, Cal., 1918.
- KURODA, N. Description of a new Tit (*Parus*). (*Tokio Zool. Mag.* xxx. 1918, p. 322.)
- WHITE, Capt. S. A. *Ooldea on the East-West Railway, Adelaide, 1918.*
- WIGLESWORTH, J. *The Heronries of Somerset.* (*Proc. Somerset Arch. Nat. Hist. Soc.* lxiv. 1918, p. 68.)
- Archivum Melitense.* (Vol. iii. no. 6, 1918.)
- Auk.* (Vol. xxxvi. no. 1, 1919.)
- Avicultural Magazine.* (Third Series, Vol. x. nos. 3-5, 1919.)
- Bird-Lore.* (Vol. xxi. no. 1, 1919.)
- Bird Notes.* (Third Series, Vol. ii. nos. 1-2, 1919.)
- British Birds.* (Vol. xii. nos. 8-10, 1919.)
- Club van Nederlandsche Voegelkundigen.* Jaarbericht, no. 8, 1918.
- Condor.* (Vol. xxi. no. 1, 1919.)
- Irish Naturalist.* (Vol. xxviii. nos. 1-2, 1919.)
- Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam.* (Vol. iii. no. 1, 1918.)
- Rev. Française d'Orn.* (Nos. 117-118, 1919.)
- Scottish Naturalist.* (Nos. 85-86, 1919.)
- South Australian Ornithologist.* (Vol. iii. nos. 7-8, 1918.)
- Tori.* *Journal of the Japanese Ornithological Society.* (Nos. 1-7, 1917-1918.)

XX.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.***Control of New Species and Subspecies.**

DEAR SIR,—In these days when controllers hold their sway in so many affairs of life, it seems to me that it is high time that ornithologists of the world should agree to select a small international committee of, say, three competent individuals, who should sit for a term of years in London, or the country which contains the largest number of types. They should be paid by international subscription. All proposed new species and subspecies should be submitted to them and passed by them. Surely it is time, for the sake of ornithology and the bird student, that some steps should be taken to prevent reckless descriptions of what are often phantom forms. So long as young Mr. —.

who, if shown an American and an European Widgeon, could not say off-hand which was which, is allowed to describe and re-describe at his own sweet will, so long will our troubles and worries multiply. Or, again, take the case of a man who tries to please a certain Mr. Smith who has contributed to an expedition and makes a "*smithi*," knowing perfectly well that it is all a farce.

How true ring the following words, taken from that great and worthy American ornithologist, Dr. Elliot Coues, at the end of his preface to the third edition of his 'Key to North American Birds':—"The 'trinomial tool' is too sharp to be made a toy; and even if we do not cut our own fingers with it, we are likely to cut the throat of the whole system of naming we have reared with such care. Better throw the instrument away than use it to slice species so thin that it takes a microscope to perceive them. It may be assumed, as a safe rule of procedure, that it is useless to divide and subdivide beyond the fair average ability of ornithologists to recognize and verify the result. Named varieties of birds that require to be 'compared with the types' by holding them up slantwise in a good strong light—just as ladies match crewels in the milliner's shop—such often exist in the cabinets or in the books of their describers, but seldom in the woods and fields."

Would that these words, printed in large type, were placed in every Museum.

It is not with the intention of discouraging the description of new forms, either specific or subspecific, that I write this; but it is obvious that the study of birds in the field will in the future be an impossibility if unlimited and often imaginary variations are allowed to go unchecked.

Mr. Claude Grant in 'The Ibis,' 1915, and Messrs. Selater and Mackworth-Praed in working out the Sudan birds are trying to sort things out and getting rid of useless synonyms; but the task is a great one to do thoroughly, and it is not pleasant to condemn our friends' work. Any bird not recognizable in the field by the eye or field-glasses is better left unnamed. If not, it means that every bird must be shot

and compared with types before any authentic note can be made on migration or any other subject! The well-trained eye of a field naturalist will detect the slightest difference in birds, no matter how much alike they may look. Take, for instance, our Common Swift and the Chinese Swift, which are found associating in enormous flocks in British East Africa in November. In the cabinet they look much alike, but when alive in the clear atmosphere of East Africa they could not possibly be mistaken. It is when we come to distinguish birds by saying (often from a small series) that they average one or two millimetres longer in the wing that difficulties begin, and the study of birds in the field will be made impossible. What we really want is a "Controller's Office." Will not the B. O. U. take the matter up and see if something cannot be done to stop the confusion which is bound to occur if things are left as they are?

Yours faithfully,

WILLOUGHBY P. LOWE.

Gorsemoor,

Throwleigh, Devon.

30 January, 1919.

Migration and Aviation.

DEAR SIR,—May I make use of 'The Ibis' in order to try to collect whatever data are available regarding observations on the migration of birds made in the air by the Royal Air Force? Perhaps any members of the B. O. U. who are able to tap such a source would be so kind as to place me in communication with those officers who have made any notes on the subject.

In response to a recent advertisement in the 'Times,' I have had a number of replies, of which a cursory examination in the light of existing knowledge on the height at which birds travel and the rate at which they fly when travelling, confirms what I suspected, that birds seldom travel by day at elevations much exceeding 2000 feet, and that their velocity of flight, with a few exceptions, rarely exceeds 50 miles per hour. But on the very scanty evidence available, it is dangerous to theorise; but it is in the hopes

of gleaning further information that I ask for notes on the following, where any observations have been made:—

1. Date and place of observation.
2. Species or type of bird.
3. Direction of flight.
4. Altitude of flight.
5. Ground velocity of flight.
6. Direction of wind and weather conditions.
7. Whether single birds, a small or large flock, or numerous small flocks were observed.

Many officers of the R.A.F. possess such material, and we want to get it while it is still fresh in their memory, though I quite realize that many officers who have done a large amount of flying may never have seen birds much above the level of the earth. In my own experience of some hundred hours in the air in East Africa, Palestine, and France I have only on three occasions seen birds, though I secretly regarded their observation of more importance than the real object of my flight.

It is in the hope of persuading officers of the R.A.F. to contribute their notes to science, and that in future they may record any observations in these columns, that I write this letter.

Yours very truly,

R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

British Delegation,
Paris.

26 February, 1919.

The Names of the Song-Thrush and the Redwing.

DEAR SIR,—Among all changes of names which have been made in accordance with a stricter application of the law of priority, there can hardly be any which has provoked more displeasure and dissension than the alteration of the names of the birds mentioned above, and probably this difference in opinion may still last a very long time. The cause of this is, of course, that Linnæus had thoroughly mixed up the two species. In *Syst. Nat.* ed. 10, 1758,

'*Turdus iliacus*' is provided with two characteristics, the first of which, "alis subtus flavescentibus," belongs to the Song-Thrush, the second, "rectricibus tribus lateralibus apice utrinque albis," applies to the Missel-Thrush.

'*Turdus musicus*,' again, receives a diagnosis which evidently is taken from a Redwing, viz., "alis subtus ferrugineis, linea superciliarum albicante." If, however, we follow Linnæus' quotation of himself in the 'Fauna Suecica,' no. 189, we find there a diagnosis and a description of the Redwing, but at the same time some additional notes which quite as clearly point to the Song-Thrush, viz., "Ova 6 cæruleo-viridia maculis nigris variis." The quoted vernacular names, "*Smolandis* Klera, *Ostrogothis* Kladra," belong also to the Song-Thrush.

It is not much better in the second edition of 'Fauna Suecica,' 1761. The short diagnosis of '*Turdus musicus*,' "remigibus basi interiore ferrugineis," contains, of course, only a characteristic of the Redwing. The diagnosis and description of '*Turdus iliacus*' are similar to that of the first edition. In the same way the notes about eggs and vernacular names referring to the Song-Thrush are the same as in the first edition: there is only one more vernacular name added, viz., "*Westmannis* Taltrast," and this belongs just as much to the Song-Thrush.

In Syst. Nat. ed. 12, the diagnosis of '*Turdus iliacus*' is clearly that of the Redwing, and that of '*Turdus musicus*' applies also to the Redwing with the words "remigibus basi interiore ferrugineis."

To sum up, it appears most probable that, although Linnæus knew the biology of the Song-Thrush, admired its singing power, and had seen its nest and eggs, he never had examined, at least not accurately, such a bird. A Redwing, on the contrary, he had evidently had in his hands, and correctly perceived its characteristics, but he took it to be the bird which he had heard singing, and the eggs of which he had seen. He had from the literature understood that there were two species, but he mixed them up, and partly also the Missel-Thrush.

The result of this is that, although the specific names

by common consent and custom have been fixed so that ornithologists for generations have used the specific name *musicus* for the Song-Thrush and *iliacus* for the Redwing, it cannot be disputed, when a strict regulation of the nomenclature according to the law of priority is observed, that the current usage is incorrect.

The best course would, no doubt, be that both these names by international consent should be declared as "nomina conservanda," but at the present time there is not much hope for such an agreement.

The present state of affairs is rather a deplorable confusion.

For the Song-Thrush alternatively are used the following names:—

Turdus musicus Linn.

Turdus iliacus Linn.

Turdus philomelus Brehm.

For the Redwing:—

Turdus iliacus Linn.

Turdus musicus Linn.

This is the more confusing, as for both species both names are used with the name of Linnæus as author. If it is found impossible to fix the names formerly used for these species as "nomina conservanda," I think the only way out of the confusion would be to discard both names (*musicus* as well as *iliacus*), and call the Song-Thrush *Turdus philomelus* Brehm, and the Redwing *Turdus mauvis* P. L. S. Müller. If the Gordian knot cannot be solved, it is better to have it cut than to have it as a cause of permanent discord.

Yours truly,

Riksmuseet,
Stockholm.

18 February, 1919.

EINAR LÖNNBERG.

The Indian Peregrine Falcon.

DEAR SIR,—With reference to the letters of Messrs. H. Whistler and E. C. Stuart Baker on the Indian Peregrine Falcon, the following notes of mine may help to solve the question.

I have a great personal knowledge of the North-West

Frontier Province from Peshawar to Baluchistan and the whole of the Punjab, having spent some thirty years in almost every Station there as far south as Quetta. During the whole time I watched carefully for nests of both *Falco peregrinus peregrinator* and *F. p. babylonicus*.

Along the foot of the hills from Jhelum to Peshawar on through Kohat to the borders of Afghanistan at Parachinar, both birds are to be found during the breeding-season. I visited two eyries near Kohat, and found both birds were undoubtedly *F. p. peregrinator*. The Pathans, who are keen falconers, recognize the difference and speak of *F. p. babylonicus* as the Red-headed Shahin. They do not take the young of *F. p. babylonicus*, as they say they are not so good for hawking purposes as *F. p. peregrinator*.

I obtained the eggs from one eyrie near Kohat through Mr. Donald. Now Mr. Donald, as quoted by Mr. Whistler, was a keen falconer, but, I may add, knew well the difference between these two birds, and he stated that they were eggs of *F. p. peregrinator* and not *F. p. babylonicus*. My observations were confirmed by Captain Phillott of 3rd Punjab Cavalry, also a keen falconer. I saw their birds, so am sure of their identification. Another falconer, Major Biddulph of 19th Cavalry, who was also a good naturalist, spoke to me about these birds; he had with him at Jhelum an old bird of *F. p. peregrinator* that he had obtained from an eyrie at Mian Quale, near Kohat. This is one of the eyries visited by me and from which eggs were obtained for me by Mr. Donald. These birds had bred at Mian Quale for many years, and the eyrie was carefully guarded by the headman of the tribe near, and it was from here he obtained his young birds.

This is the evidence I have referring to *F. p. peregrinator*, but more south, in the Gumal Pass, near Dera Ismail Khan, the only breeding birds were *F. p. babylonicus*. One nest is mentioned by Captain Phillott in Blanford's 'Birds,' vol. iii. I also saw a nest of *F. babylonicus* with young near the same place. This nest was shown to me by a Pathan, who spoke of it as the "Red-headed Shahin."

I took eggs from an eyrie at Fort Munro in Baluchistan, with certainty identifying the birds and their light heads, as they passed within twenty yards of and below me, while the eggs were being taken.

I again saw a nest with young near Jhelum that was certainly *Falco p. babylonicus*. These birds were at Fort Sandeman, Baluchistan, during the breeding-season, though I did not find the eyrie.

From this I can safely say that I have found *Falco p. peregrinator* the common breeding-bird in the northern part of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, and *Falco p. babylonicus* south of Kohat and in Baluchistan.

Yours truly,

Tonbridge, Kent.

12 January, 1919.

R. H. RATTRAY (Colonel),

M.B.O.U.

Gannet Settlements in Newfoundland.

DEAR SIR,—It is good news to hear from Mr. P. A. Taverner of the Geological Survey, Ottawa, that he has received information of another Gannetry, not heretofore recorded. It lies off Cape St. Mary, southern Newfoundland, where the Gannets are said to have chosen an isolated rock, of some three or four acres extent. This, however, may not, after all, be the first Gannetry for Newfoundland, as long ago there appears to have been one on Funk Island.

Yours truly,

Keswick, Norfolk.

11 January, 1919.

J. H. GURNEY.

Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The 36th Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union was held in New York City, 11 November, 1918. Owing to the epidemic of influenza the public meetings for the presentation of papers were omitted and the sessions were limited to business meetings of the Council and Fellows and Members. The election of officers resulted in the choice of the following officers for the ensuing

year :—*President*, John H. Sage, Portland, Conn.; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. Witmer Stone, Philadelphia, and Dr. George Bird Grinnell, New York; *Secretary*, Dr. T. S. Palmer, 1939 Biltmore Street, Washington, D.C.; and *Treasurer*, Dr. Jonathan Dwight, New York. Five additions were made to the list of Honorary Fellows, and 14 foreign ornithologists were enrolled as Corresponding Fellows, including E. C. Stuart Baker, W. E. Collinge, Tom Iredale, F. C. R. Jourdain, and N. F. Ticehurst. The Honorary Fellows were Dr. Roberto Dabbene of Buenos Aires; Dr. Alwyn K. Haagner of Pretoria, Transvaal; Dr. Einar Lönnberg of Stockholm, Sweden; M. Auguste Menegaux of Paris; and Dr. Peter Suschkin of Kharkov, Russia. Five new Members, Dr. Harold C. Bryant, George K. Cherrie, Lieut. Ludlow Griscom, Lieut. J. L. Peters, and R. W. Williams, and 147 Associates were added to the rolls.

Although the Union has had seventy-five of its younger and more active members in military and naval services, it has survived the war without suffering any decrease in its membership, its income, or in the size of its journal. It has not found it necessary to increase its dues, and the past year has proved one of the most prosperous in its history.

The next meeting in 1919 will be held in New York City.

Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union.

The Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union for 1919 was held on Wednesday, 12 March, at the Offices of the Zoological Society of London.

Dr. W. Eagle Clarke, President, was in the Chair.

There were forty-six Members present.

The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting were read and confirmed.

The Committee recommended that Mr. W. L. Slater, M.A., be re-elected Editor of '*The Ibis*' for the succeeding series, and that Mr. H. J. Elwes, F.R.S., be elected a

member of the Committee in the place of Lord Rothschild, F.R.S., who retires by seniority.

These recommendations were confirmed by the meeting.

The Annual Report of the Committee was read as follows:—

“The Committee have pleasure in being able to report that the financial situation on the 1st of January, 1919, was very satisfactory.

“Our credit balance was, on that date, £140 as against £236 on the 1st of January, 1917, but in that year we had an outstanding account of a little over £45, whereas this year we have an outstanding asset of just under £50. Really, therefore, our balance is roughly £185 as against £190 in 1917.

“There is, however, another item which calls for remark in this year's account, and that is the payment of £115 on account of paper, as against under £50 in 1917. This is because we were obliged to buy at a very high figure sufficient paper to supply the issue of ‘The Ibis’ for 1918 and to leave a certain reserve in hand for 1919. Before the exhaustion of this supply, we anticipate a large drop in the cost of paper and a corresponding decrease in our payments on account of the production of ‘The Ibis.’

“The accounts have been audited by Mr. Munt, and are shown in the circular issued to all members.

“The total receipts in 1918 have been £716 as against £850 in the previous twelve months. The reasons for the decrease are principally the reduction in the sales of ‘The Ibis,’ roughly £70, and the Jubilee Supplement, £50. The cost of ‘The Ibis’ has been £688 17s. 10d. as against £523 6s. 6d. in 1917. The reason for the greatly increased cost is primarily, as already shown, due to the high price of paper, but also on account of the increased cost of every item connected with printing and publication.

“The present volume is the sixtieth and completes the final volume of the tenth series. It contains 748 pages and is illustrated with five coloured plates, five uncoloured plates, and twelve text-figures.

“The sale of ‘The Ibis’ has been well maintained, although this year we have had no large demand for the older back numbers. There continues to be a certain demand for the B. O. U. List of British Birds, and a few copies have also been sold of the General Index, and Jubilee Supplement.

“The Committee regret to report the deaths of the following members since the last Annual General Meeting :— Professor Dr. L. Brasil, Mr. N. Chaplin, the Marchese G. Doria, Mr. F. Du Cane Godman, Colonel W. V. Legge, Mr. J. C. McLean, Dr. G. Martorelli, Messrs. L. E. Mouritz, T. A. Dorrien-Smith, and F. Sharman.

“Owing to the War and the loss of communications, no information was received until recently of the death of the Marchese G. Doria, which occurred in 1913.

“We would especially wish to place on record at this Annual General Meeting our profound regret at the great loss sustained by the British Ornithologists’ Union together with the whole scientific world, in the death of Mr. F. Du Cane Godman, so many years Secretary and President of the Union, of which he was one of the founders.

“The following gentlemen have resigned :—Messrs. J. Backhouse, A. Chapman, W. W. Fowler, Rev. H. E. Fox, J. E. Harting, W. Hartman, P. J. C. McGregor, G. A. MacMillan, A. H. Macpherson, W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, W. P. Pyecraft, and W. C. Wright.

“The names of Messrs. G. A. Booth, R. Patterson, and J. Sargent have been removed from the List of Members under Rule 6.

“The membership of the Union is given below in comparison with the previous five years :—

		1919.	1918.	1917.	1916.	1915.	1914.
Ordinary	Members...	418	423	416	420	441	433
Extraordinary	1	1	1	1	1	1
Honorary	7	8	9	9	9	7
Hon. Lady	., ...	8	8	9	8	6	6
Colonial	9	9	10	10	10	
Foreign	13	20	19	19	20	19

“There are 13 candidates for Ordinary Membership, 2 for Honorary Membership, 4 for Foreign Membership, and 1 for Colonial Membership.”

Arising from the Report, Mr. A. Trevor-Battye moved that it was desirable that there should be a memorial in the Natural History Museum to the memory of the late Mr. F. Du Cane Godman, and that the Committee of the Union, together with Lord Rothschild and Mr. J. G. Millais, should meet to consider how best this matter could be carried out.

This was seconded by Mr. H. J. Elwes, who suggested that the name of Mr. Salvin, for so many years the scientific partner of Mr. Godman, should be associated with that of Mr. Godman.

The motion was carried.

Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker then moved that the Union should found a medal to be given from time to time for distinguished Ornithological work, in memory of Messrs. Godman and Salvin, and that the medal be called the “Godman-Salvin” medal.

This was seconded by Mr. E. Bidwell, and supported by Lord Rothschild.

After some discussion it was agreed that this second motion referred to the Union alone, but in the case of the Memorial in the Museum, the other Scientific Societies and bodies with which Mr. Godman was connected would probably wish to join with the Union in carrying out the Memorial.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Messrs. G. H. Lings and H. Massey were appointed Scrutineers to superintend the Ballot.

The following 13 candidates for Ordinary Membership were then balloted for and elected:—

Geoffrey Frances Archer, C.M.G.

Edward Carleton Arnold.

Thomas Porter Backhouse.

Captain William Kenneth Bigger, R.A.M.C.
 Captain H. Brocklebank.
 Edgar P. Chance.
 Walter Edward Collinge, D.Sc., M.Sc., F.L.S.,
 F.E.S.
 Nina Johnstone Douglas.
 Captain Tom George Longstaff.
 The Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P.
 Wesley Theodore Page, F.Z.S.
 Theodore Richard Robinson.
 The Hon. Guy Lawrence Wemyss-Charteris.

Mr. Leonhard Stejneger, C.M.Z.S., a Foreign Member, was elected Honorary Member.

M. A. Menegaux was elected an Honorary Member.

Mr. Outram Bangs, Dr. Roberto Dabbeue, Dr. Joseph Grinnell, and Count Nils Gyldenstolpe were elected Foreign Members.

Mr. Percy A. Taverner was elected a Colonial Member.

Mr. W. L. Slater announced that the Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union had appointed a Special Committee to prepare and publish a new List of the Birds of the World in conjunction with the American Ornithologists' Union.

The Special Committee proposed are:—

Messrs. E. C. Stuart Baker, C. Chubb, W. Eagle Clarke, E. Hartert, T. Iredale, G. M. Mathews, Lord Rothschild, and W. L. Slater.

The Committee has already met on several occasions and has been in communication with the Secretary of the American Ornithologists' Union, who has replied that his Union will gladly co-operate with the B. O. U. in preparing the work. It is proposed to publish a series of six volumes under the title of '*Systema Avium*,' containing a list of the birds of the six zoo-geographical regions, *i. e.* Palearctic, Indian, Ethiopian, Australian, Nearctic, and Neotropical.

A fuller notice of the proposed '*Systema Avium*' will

be found in the January number of this year's 'Ibis' on page 164.

The scheme met with the cordial approval of the members present.

Mr. H. M. Wallis made some remarks in regard to the constitution of the Union, and stated that he believed that it was the wish of a considerable body of the members that the Committee of the Union should be enlarged and at least three additional members appointed.

The statement was supported by the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain and others.

The Chairman announced that this matter would receive the careful consideration of the Committee, and that the matter would be discussed at the next Annual Meeting.

Dr. Coltart proposed a vote of thanks to the Zoological Society for the use of their Meeting Rooms.

This was seconded by Mr. E. Bidwell and carried unanimously.

A vote of thanks to the Auditor, Mr. Munt, was proposed by Mr. H. Matthews and carried unanimously.

Mr. Meade Waldo proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, which was also carried unanimously.

The usual dinner was held later in the evening at Pagani's Restaurant in conjunction with the British Ornithologists' Club, and was largely attended.

The Ogilvie collection of British Birds.

The fine mounted collection of British Birds made by the late Mr. Fergus Monteith Ogilvie, who died last year at Oxford, has been presented by his widow to the Ipswich Museum. The birds are all set up in separate cases on much the same plan as those in the Booth Museum now at Brighton. These cases are 238 in number, and the birds contained in about 150 of them were obtained in Suffolk.

They are beautifully mounted by Mr. Gunn of Norwich with the natural backgrounds and surroundings.

Minute details of the circumstances of the capture of each specimen were recorded by Mr. Ogilvie in a MS. catalogue, and it is proposed to prepare a printed catalogue from this for publication. The collection is a most valuable addition to the Ipswich Museum and will greatly add to its attractiveness.

At the same time Mr. Ogilvie had made a very extensive collection of British Birds in skin, chiefly among the Shore and Water-birds. This collection, consisting of over 1200 specimens, has been presented to the British Museum by Mrs. Ogilvie, and is a most valuable addition to the bird-room. The collection of British Birds in skin in the British Museum has never been worthy of that institution, and the Ogilvie collection will certainly do much to remedy this defect.